a long illness wherein I could scarce walk, write paint or dress myself, as yet I have not quite got up my steam – but my picture of the marriage of Cana is much admired Your loving Joe

My dear Maria 7th December 1870

For a wonder I am aware that this is my birth day & so I write to you not only as it will please you; but also as I have some good news to console you with as you may have heard some bad news of me particularly of my being dead which was in several London papers

If it had been true I could not have been able to tell you as I am now able to tell you that I am "alive & kicking" but my enemies in this great Roman change thought they'd got me down & so they gave me a Newspaper Killing

S There will be soon great walking for the English are not coming this winter

owing to the horrid war, Rome will suffer
Judging from our weather here you
must have worse
I hope you did not hear the bad news
about me that my Consulate was to be done away
with on the coming of the Italian Capital
here & that I was to be left without a
penny - our Ambassador at Florence
told me this with great disdain, but
I am glad to find it false, for my salary
is to remain the same & my Consulate will
become a mere sinecure & I have got
so well in health I may yet be able to
snap my fingers at all these enemies
The news at first struck me down a
little particularly on your account - you
know my Italian Consulate finished with
the siege of Rome, by which I have lost
half my income but I am glad to tell you

that I am not a single penny in debt & the
Acqua Marcia is about to pay me the
interest as the water is selling

You'll be surprised to hear that the
sixth marriage in my dear family is
soon to take place — Arthur is to be
married to Miss Joan Agnew who has
a house & garden on Denmark hill

Rome is very miserable in the rain &
I cannot venture out as my rheumatism
might return

The hard fall of English now come
will not do much to enliven the City
but every thing is falling in price in
consequence & yesterday I had a fine
Woodcock for a shilling! when the
English are here it would cost 5 & 6
shillings — other matters in proportion
so that I am in comparative repose
no letters of introduction yet, what a

could not walk & was carried about, yet the Doctors assured us that there was no organic defect & that it was an affair of nerves – One day we all went to the Villa Pamphilii & at the beauty of the flowers this dear little creature forgot that she could not walk & ran about all day gathering the flowers, & was never after in the smallest degree lame – no doubt this has to do with her artistic temperament

Don't forget to tell me about young Emma & Cairo – I just hear that in the last Illustrated London news there is a sketch of my picture & the famous cippus seen in the Roman Exhibition

I am giving you "a long yarn" but as you tell me that my letters amuse you so you will not be tired of them, for I shall write you another with the £10 at the end of the month – You'd be astonished at the amount of good things I am able to do, not only for English people but for Italians – Every day I get a despatch from the Prime Minister at Florence & I am always able to do what he requests – Now I hope to hear a good account of dear Tom & that he can hear this letter read

Your loving brother Joe